United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/966
3 September 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Ambassadors of United Kingdom and France convey to Secretary-General letter of request of Baltic States to become members of United Nations.

- Secretary-General calls on international community to strengthen compact with African States as stipulated by United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986 - 1990.

- Secretary-General says "modest gains" have been recorded in integrating women since Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women entered into force ten years ago.

- Future nuclear power strategy is theme of International Atomic Energy Agency conference in Vienna.

* * *

The Ambassadors to the United Nations of the United Kingdom and France today at noon conveyed to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar letters of requesting admission to the United Nations from the Baltic States.

Earlier today the Secretary-General told correspondents at Headquarters that he had observed with interest the decision of the United States to recognize the independence of the three Baltic States: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. He said the application for membership of the United Nations would have to go to the Security Council first and then to the General Assembly for final approval.

Speaking to the press after the presentation of the letters, British Ambassador Sir David Hannay said efforts were under way to admit the three States to the United Nations in time for the forthcoming session of the General Assembly and that such a step would be "historic". The Security Council was now holding consultations to discuss the matter.

The Ambassador of France, Jean-Bernard Merimee, is the President of the Security Council for the month of September. He succeeds Jose Ayala Lasso of Ecuador.

* * *

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General today called on the international community to organize "smaller, freely entered partnerships or compacts" between individual African States and their chosen development partners, in order to make the partnership "more operational".

Addressing the opening meeting of the Ad Hoc committee of the Whole on the Final Review and Appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986 - 1990, he said the economic and social situation in Africa had actually deteriorated over that five-year period.

The Secretary-General said his report, which he submitted to the Committee last week, had offered suggestions, including the identification of targets in key areas, in order to improve the economic situation of the continent. For example, he said, African countries must seek to improve at least a 6 per cent annual growth rate, meaning that development assistance should be increased to $30 million by 1992, and then grow at the rate of 4 per cent annually until the year 2000.

* * *

The Secretary-General has called on the countries who have yet to become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to do so this year -- the tenth anniversary year of the Convention.

In a statement to mark the anniversary of its entry into force, he said the Convention was the first human rights instrument to focus comprehensively on the rights of women. Called by some a Magna Carta for women, the treaty expressed in clear language what the framers of the United Nations Charter meant when they determined "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women", the Secretary-General said.

There are now 108 States parties to the Convention.

* * *

Nuclear power safety strategy for the future is the theme of an international conference which is being held this week at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) headquarters in Vienna.

The 300 participants in the Conference are expected to discuss safety issues on which international consensus would be desirable. Among the safety issues to be addressed are the fundamental principles for the safe use of nuclear power, treatment of nuclear power plants built to earlier safety standards, and the final disposal of radioactive waste.

* * *

The conference is presided over by the German Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Klaus Töpfer.

* *** *